



The Martha Messenger

Community Newsletter of the Martha T.Berry MCF

August 2009

Volume 9

Enjoy the Sunshine and the Beautiful Days of Summer



Bringing You A Story Of Courage And Determination



Introducing the MS Gang...Becky, Robin, Linda, and Julie

If there are two letters that have the ability to strike fear into the minds of persons seeking medical help, they must be MS. A disease of the neurological system, Multiple Sclerosis is defined by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke as a disease of the central nervous system in which the nerve cells in the brain and the central nervous system cannot communicate with one another. The cause is not really known although some researchers say it is hereditary while others blame the environment or say it is infectious, possibly caused by a virus. Symptoms include visual problems, muscle weakness, loss of balance, abnormal sensory feelings, paralysis, and just about any neurological symptom that exists. The disease is unpredictable and symptoms range from mild to severe to devastating. There is no cure. Medication has not been promising.

Today, a group of MS residents here at MTB have stepped forward to tell their stories and to share with us their courageous fight and determination to

live a happy life. Though they call themselves the MS GANG, they are not exclusive. They are not a clique. They welcome others with MS to come and join them and indeed, welcome all residents whatever their problems or diagnosis. Their stories illustrate the widely different courses that MS can take, some with numerous remissions, some with a rapidly progressing set of symptoms. However, all stories are similar in that each has experienced sadness and even depression and has moved on to find a new life here at MTB.

Julie Lynch who is now 54 years of age was a real tom boy as a kid. She was in good health and took part in numerous childhood activities. She played baseball and loved to play tennis. As an adult, Julie was a teacher's aide for a Special Education teacher and loved working with kids. Her first MS symptoms appeared soon after her daughter was born. She had double vision and consulted an ophthalmologist who suspected that she had Multiple

Sclerosis to which Julie replied, "I don't have time to be sick. I have a new baby." She was 21 years old. In a few days the symptoms disappeared. Julie was fine until she developed numbness and a "pins and needles" sensation about 10 years later. The next 5 years were a giant roller coaster with numerous tests and varying symptoms including loss of balance. An MRI revealed lesions in Julie's brain and the diagnosis of MS was made. Julie's daughter, aware of her symptoms, suspected a diagnosis of MS long before the doctor, however, and quickly other symptoms began appearing. Next, Julie experienced unusual visual fields, loss of balance and difficulty walking. Soon the MS began to grow worse very rapidly and she moved from a cane to a walker, to a wheelchair in a short time. Her husband had been caring for her up to this time and, together they made the decision for Julie to move to Martha T. Berry. They had been together for 39



Julie Lynch

years and this was a very difficult move for the couple to make. Julie came to MTB about a year and a half ago. She tries to smile and greet everyone with whom she comes in contact. Julie says that she doesn't believe in feeling sorry for herself and that laughter is her best medicine.



Robin Hofer

You could not find a person who loved her job as a hotel banquet chef more than **Robin Hofer** did even if you searched this country from end to end. She loved cooking and loved to see the smiles on people's faces when they tasted her food. Life was good and then in three hours, all was changed. Robin came home tired from work and took a nap. She woke up unable to move. Her parents took her to their home where she recovered to a degree but the symptoms returned and intensified. In 1982, Robin was in the hospital having a spinal tap and the diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis was made. She says, "My whole life left me. I could no longer do the things that I loved to do." Her parents sent Robin to business school and she recovered well enough to hold a job as a clerk at a circuit board factory. It was at the factory that Robin met her husband. Robin says that "he loved me and married me in spite of the MS and we were married 11 years ago. We both love each other so very much to this day." The disease rapidly grew worse and Robin progressed from a cane to a walker to a wheelchair. Together with her husband, she made the decision to move to Martha T. Berry about a year ago. She says that she was a "real mess" when she first moved here but has learned to be happy in spite of the MS and her limitations. At first, Robin always stayed alone in her room

and would not come out to talk with anyone. Finally, she agreed to have lunch with Julie and the two became friends. Robin credits Julie for the change in her attitude and her outlook on life. She says that she never dreamt that friends could and would make such a difference in her life.

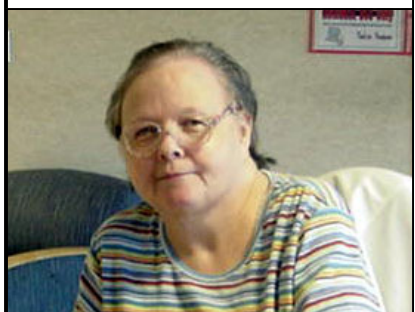
Rebecca Foscett says that at one time she was "a real brat" and that she spent her time playing sports. The middle child with two brothers and two sisters, she always wanted and had her own way. She loved cats and dogs and had several. As a young woman, Becky worked as a bar maid and for a time, at the Children's Zoo at Belle Isle. She was married for six years and was having a good life. Then she began to have visual symptoms that went on for several years. At that time, she felt numb on one side of her body so Becky consulted a neurologist. After undergoing four spinal taps, a diagnosis of MS was made. She continued to live at home with help from a caregiver but finally, the Michigan State Housing Authority decided that she could no longer care for herself. She said MTB is a good place but that it was just horrible for her to have to follow rules when she first came here. She says that the A & R staff does much to draw her out of depression and that if it was not for her friends, she would be holed up in her room all day long, glued to the TV. "We support one another. Friends help us to keep going."



Rebecca Foscett

Linda Goff was a very quiet child. She was a middle child with a brother and a sister and says that she had typical childhood interests, playing the kinds of games that all children like to play. As an adult, she had several jobs,

working as a housekeeper at Mount Clemens General for 16 years. Linda and her husband John were married in 1968 and for many years, things were good. Then she began dragging her left foot. Linda's diagnosis was made after spinal taps and other tests. The frightening news was that she had MS. It progressed rapidly and she went from a cane to a wheelchair within one year. John had always been loving and supportive and he did all the work at home in addition to caring for Linda. Finally, Linda progressed to the point where John could no longer manage her care alone and a joint decision was made to have her move to MTB. Linda says that "John has been a godsend to me and I love him very much" At first Linda found things hard here but says that the friends she has made have helped her find a new kind of happiness.

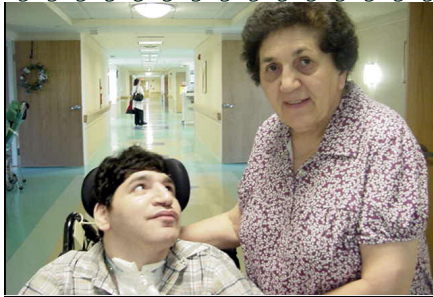


Linda Goff

Each member of the MS Gang experienced sadness and depression when she lost the life she once had, yet each has been able to find happiness once again. Life has changed drastically but yet, it is still good. Each has found friends with common interests and they spend time together. Each has learned to share concerns, hopes, worries, and joys...to share all the myriad experiences that fill the days of our human existence and to give one another support. They have discovered that a sense of humor is imperative to survival. They have learned that a burden shared becomes lighter. The MS Gang teaches us that when we laugh together, we make it difficult to shed tears. The MS Gang has the courage and determination to make things work.

We salute and admire not only the MS Gang, but all the residents of MTB who daily live with courage and determination, finding joy in life in spite of the difficulties they experience.

Sharing The Moments Of Our Lives At Martha T. Berry



Gabriel Cueter with his mom, Kette.

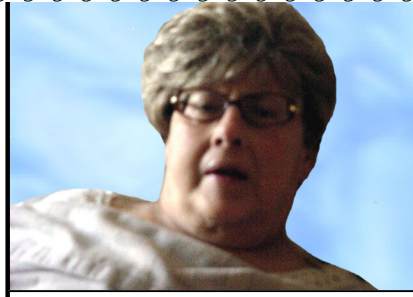
On August 20, 1976, Tony and Ketty Cueter welcomed their second child, a son, at a hospital in Detroit, Michigan. The family was overjoyed and, together with their two year old daughter, Celeste, they doted on the new addition to the family whom they named Gabriel. By the time Gabriel was 4 months old, it became apparent that he was not developing normally. The concerned parents took the baby to a pediatrician who then sent them to a neurologist. The specialist conducted tests and determined that Gabriel had suffered a "trauma of birth" and that his development would never be normal. The Cueters learned of a school called the Foundation for Exceptional Children that specialized in children with problems like Gabriel's and so, he began school at the age of 11 months. The school had an excellent program for children ages 1 to 7 that included activities to stimulate the brain and promote physical development as well. The parents were taught techniques to use at home so that reinforcement was constant. They learned how to help Gabriel stand and how to feed him. Ketty prepared foods that he could manage including pureed chicken, bananas applesauce, fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, soft eggs, and cereals. The child did well with these foods but was unable to move on to solid foods as he grew. Gabriel developed a "bent posture" that compressed his inner organs so, in 1993, the doctors performed a back surgery for scoliosis in order to improve his posture. He did not do well and there were many complications following the surgery. He developed seizures and Ketty credits a young woman physician at MCGH with saving his life after an especially severe episode. By this time, Gabriel was no longer able to eat normally, and a feeding tube was inserted to provide nutrition. Previously, Gabriel was able to vocalize but now this was no longer possible. However, it was easier to administer his

medication and nutrition with the feeding tube so Gabriel did well and began to gain weight. The family moved to Macomb County so that he could attend the Glen Peters School until the age of 26. The three family members were a great team, caring for the young man at home and providing for all his needs. In 2003, while Gabriel was hospitalized for pneumonia, Tony died of cancer. His last words expressed concern for Gabriel and reassured Ketty, "I trust you and know that you will do well for him." Doctors suggested that Gabriel be placed in a medical care facility and Ketty selected MTB for his placement. She is pleased with his care here and thanks the staff for all they do for him. Ketty visits her son every day. Even though she appreciates what his caregivers do, she wants to be involved in her son's life. Gabriel smiles as his mother enters his room and, Ketty feels that he recognizes her even though he may not really understand that she is his mother. Above all, Ketty, a loving and devoted mother wants it to be known that though Gabriel has not had many of life's experiences, he is very greatly loved. On August 20, Gabriel will be 33. As always, Ketty will be there.



Gabriel Cueter

Even though she was not feeling very well, on Monday, July 27, **Geraldine Raszkowski**, graciously allowed herself to be photographed and took part in an interview for this newsletter article. She was pleased at the idea of being featured in the monthly birthday article and wanted to relate some of her life's experiences. Geraldine passed away peacefully on Wednesday, July 29, with her mother holding her hand., and so we include this article in keeping with her wish and

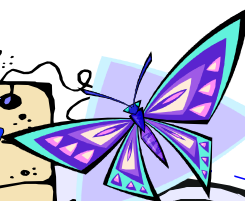


Geraldine Raszkowski

in honor of the many years of her life spent as an educator. Geraldine was born in Natrona, PA, and lived there until the family moved to the Detroit area in 1949. An outgoing child, she loved caring for her younger brother, Edwin. She attended St. Catherine School and Dominican High. Geraldine earned a BA at Marygrove College and went on to earn a Master's of Theology Degree at Sacred Heart Seminary. She spent her entire life as a devoted educator, teaching the middle grades for 15 years and acting as principal of Emerson School in Fraser for another 15 years. Geraldine was very active in her church and was a founding member of Saint Paul of Tarsus Church where she also directed the Religious Education Program. Upon her retirement in 1997, she pursued her desire to see the beauty of the world and traveled to a great extent. She backpacked across Europe for 6 weeks with a friend. Geraldine and her mother were very close and enjoyed being travel companions. They visited Europe 7 times and spent time driving cross country to take in all the sights. In 2002, Geraldine began to feel ill and was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Geraldine was a fighter and, determined to recover, she underwent chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. Treatment was not successful and, needing a greater degree of care, she entered MTB in May, 2009. She put up a courageous fight, and, when it became apparent that further treatment would not bring about a cure, she entered the Hospice program. She appreciated the care given her here and she spoke of the nursing staff with gratitude. We bid farewell to Geraldine who has embarked upon her final voyage. We salute her courage and realize that her great faith in God brought her comfort during her final moments. Rest in peace, Geraldine.



Happy August Birthday To Our Residents



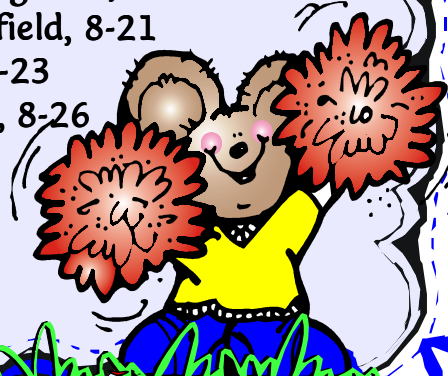
Hilliard Code, 8-3
Kimberly Gentile, 8-5
Sharon Crozier, 8-7
Jeffrey Cornelius, 8-10
Thomas Mantych, 8-14
Helen Herman 8-17
Gabriel Cueter, 8-20
Helen Oberdorf, 8-23
George Friedman, 8-23

Stephen Dudek, 8-4
Marion Pater, 8-6
Jeffrey Law, 8-7
Ruth Machon, 8-12
Carol Daugherty, 8-14
Thomas Maccagnone, 8-20
Kenneth Holyfield, 8-21
June Bauer, 8-23
Catherine Fisher, 8-26

Elvira Brumm, 8-27

Angelina Molinari, 8-27

Larry Wyatt, 8-31



Events & Fundraisers

8-1	King of Kings Bingo	10:30 AM
8-2	Knights of Columbus Rosary	2:00 PM
8-4	Resident Council	2:30 PM
8-5	Rita's Pizza Party	2:30 PM
8-8	King of Kings Music Group	10:30 AM
8-9	Cootie Picnic	12:00 PM
8-11	Birthday Bingo	2:30 PM
8-11	Tony the Accordion Player With Banjo Dan	7:00 PM
8-11 and 12	Books Are Fun Fundraiser	All Day
8-13	Good Neighbor Bingo	7:00PM
8-18	Steve's Bingo	2:30 PM
8-19	Sandy the Violinist	10:30 PM
8-25	Red Hat Tea Party	2:30 PM
8-26	Aunt Theresa Bingo	10:30 PM
8-27	Pet-A-Pet	7:00 PM





Residents' Corner



by Laurie Richards

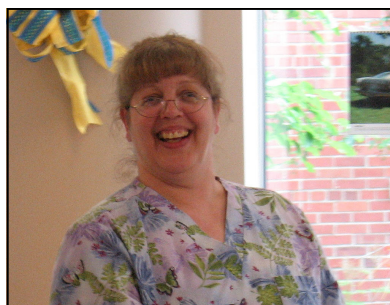
Resident Council was held on Tuesday, July 7, 2009 at 2:30 PM. During the meeting, the residents discussed changes in the Dietary Department, the recent changes in briefs available, clothing concerns, outing ideas, and the Products Committee. The Council is also thankful for the addition of the Fox Sports Network on the TV Line-Up. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 4, 2009.

Employees of the Month for August



Marge Peterson is someone who is always there to help.

The Employees of the Month have both been nominated from the ranks of the A & R Staff. Marge Peterson is considered a very hard worker and one who is always there and willing to get the job done. You never have to ask her to do something twice. She is a great helper and a friendly person. Pat Herman is a very talented and capable person and is a "Jack of All Trades." She has a friendly smile and will go out of her way to do whatever you ask. She is known for her wonderful baked beans at the resident BBQ's. Pat can be counted on when there is a job to be done. She is someone who can make things work.



Pat Herman is known as a very talented and capable person.



Cyndi Says.....



Exciting News! Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan has notified Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility that we have been approved as a Blue Cross Provider and Blue Cross Advantage Plan Provider. In the near future, we will be assigned a Provider Number. Then, Admissions can begin notifying hospitals of our status and we will then begin accepting for care and treatment, individuals whose primary insurance is Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan.

All four union contracts have been ratified and we can now move forward to implement the Joint Operating Agreement. The unions ratifying contracts are The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, United Auto Workers Local 412, Service Employees International Union-Healthcare Michigan, and the Michigan Nurses' Association. Thank you to everyone for your support and for making it possible to reach our operational goals.

The Social Services Board has reduced their pay rate per meeting by 14%. This voluntary reduction applies to both the Social Services Board Meeting and the Martha T. Berry Governing Board Meeting payments. Board members wanted to demonstrate their willingness to make financial sacrifices as our employees have also had to make. Thank you to all for your hard work and your willingness to support the Joint Operating Agreement.

In Loving Memory

Marguerite Walters

Barbara Anger

Jeanette Stempien

Richard Mihlader

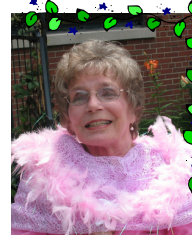
Nellie Lum

Geraldine Roszkowski

Sincere Sympathy is extended to family and friends.

August Poetry by Lenore Plowchan, Resident Poet

August Days are sometimes called the "Dog Days of Summer." It also can be cold this month and that would be a bummer.



There is no holiday in August for you to be celebrating. Maybe you know of a birthday or, perhaps a lovely wedding.

There is one day that mothers like to celebrate. Some kids go back to school this month and mothers never forget that date!

Enjoy these August days and August Nights too. They may keep you Warm this winter-they do a lot for you.

The Martha Messenger Is Brought To You Through the Kindness And Generosity of...

Denise Wilson,	Jan Weiss	The Activities Staff	Tom Murphy
Kathy Lesniak	Ruth & Sergio Barrientez,	Sally Wheeler	Chris Cronin's Family
Shendel Family	Gregory & Judith Zdankiewicz	Sue Chadda	Victoria Kapp
Douglas & Deborah DeMeester	Diane Gracher	In memory of Shaun	
Susan Kozemko	Anonymous	Marty Mok in memory of Al Mok	
Ketty Cueter	Sharon Tomkowiak	Emily Krueger	
Saint Athanasius Church	Litho Printing		

Phillip Timmon's Great Baseball Adventure



Phillip is wheeled into Comerica Park as the guest of the Detroit Tigers.



Phillip awaits the start of the game in the Tiger Wives' Club Area.



Phillip is granted a private interview with Brandon Inge.



Brandon Inge of the Detroit Tigers signs an autograph for Phillip Timmons.

Injured in a severe accident when he was a child, Phillip Timmons has spent most of his life as a resident of the Martha T. Berry MCF. Though he has been unable to travel, he has expressed a wish to attend a Tiger's Ball Game. Recently, Rebecca Martz RN wrote to the Detroit Tigers about his condition and the team arranged for Phillip to visit the ball park and attend a game. On Thursday, July 23, Phillip, aided by the In-House Hospice Team attended a game at Tiger Stadium. He had a wonderful time and was granted the wish of a lifetime.



Phillip is greeted by one of the Tigers Broadcasting Team before the game.



In-House Hospice team Marty, Cindi, and Sherry wait with Phillip for the game to start.



Phillip and his Hospice team were able to go right down on the field before the game started.

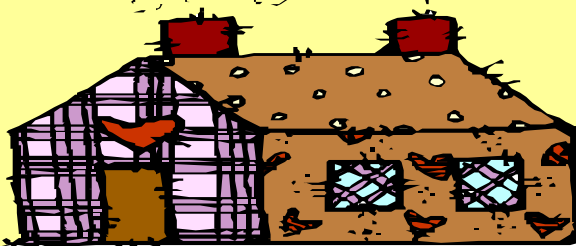
Welcome New Residents

Vayola Batronie
John Gielniak
Thomas Maccagnone
Helen Sikora

Julia Price
Marion Pater
Helen Oberdorf
Vera Bahlman

Best Wishes To Those Who Returned Home

Robert Westfall Beverly Brown Milton Darling
Virginia Mazzarese Karen Loos



Alongi's Donates Plants

Alongi's Greenhouse donated a large number of flowers and plants to beautify our out-of-door areas. Here Ron Goss is seen using the donated plants to put in a lovely little garden area near the front parking lot. A giant **Thank You to Alongi's** for the generous donation. We certainly appreciate their gift!



Richard Rowe



Charlie Thomas

Richard Rowe and Charlie "the Carpenter" Thomas are leaving MTB. A reception was held to wish them well on Friday, July 31. We will miss them and their dedicated service.

A Letter From the Editor of the Martha Messenger...Please Read!

When I was asked to do this newsletter, I gladly agreed. After all, I had been a teacher and did a newsletter at school and I love designing things on the computer. At first, I thought 4 pages would be enough but soon learned that there is just too much going on here and that we needed 8 pages. Then the friend who printed the paper free of charge, in color, met with hard times at work and had to withdraw his offer. I thought we would have to resort to black and white and then some great sponsors stepped up and we continue our colorful editions. I really wanted to use the Martha Messenger to keep residents and staff aware of the various events and happenings and the teamwork needed at a facility like MTB. Now, the newsletter has taken yet another new turn. At first I was very concerned about HIPAA and using information but I have learned that residents want to tell their stories. I find it courageous and inspiring to have residents share their conditions, problems, and feelings and to have them tell how they cope and find ways to deal with life no matter how hard it may be. It has to be encouraging and inspiring for anyone who reads the articles. It has to promote feelings of togetherness and to bring all of us closer to one another. Be assured that anyone who reveals medical information is willing to do so and that these individuals sign a release permitting the Martha Messenger to print their contribution. I am happy to act at the editor of the Martha Messenger and I thank you sincerely for helping me produce this newsletter. Sincerely,

Rita Shendel